

She cited Adelaide, Australia, as an example where separating waste at source has been practiced for 40 years.

The Netherlands, on the other hand, began good waste management practices 35 years ago.

“I wonder where Malaysia was then. This is something we have to catch up very fast.

“During the 80s, when the economy was vibrant in Malaysia, I think we did not put enough attention with regard to waste management. We could have done that 20 years ago, we could have been better now, but it’s never too late,” Zuraidah said.

The ministry has recently announced the “Trash to Cash” campaign which is an initiative to promote cleanliness within communities.

Zuraida said the pilot project has been conducted in Ampang which covers 24 municipal councillors.

The project in Ampang is expected to be completed by year-end, before the project is expanded nationwide.

“It’s good because when we launched it, we got the community to be involved. At the end of the programme, they get to turn their trash into money on the spot.

“Now they have done six zones, so there are 18 more zones to go. After they have completed all, we can look into it and apply to other municipalities as well,” added Zuraida.

The ministry recently announced a new plastic recycling policy to improve plastic waste management that can help boost the country’s economy.

Zuraida has said the policy would be developed comprehensively and would obtain inputs from the Malaysian Plastics Recycling Industry White Paper.